

# Apalachee Audubon

The Newsletter of the Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

Vol. 108, No. 2

October 2009

www.apalachee.org

## OCTOBER POTLUCK DINNER & PROGRAM: ST. MARKS WHOOPING CRANE UPDATE

Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 918 Railroad Avenue  
Potluck Dinner 6:30 p.m.

(Bring a dish to share or a contribution of \$5.)

Program 7:30 p.m.

*Terry Peacock will talk about the new class of Whooping Cranes coming to SMNWR and give an update on last year's cranes.*

On a frigid morning last January, thousands of people gathered in St. Marks to witness the flyover of the first class of Whooping Cranes to be escorted by Operation Migration (OM) to the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. This remarkable program teaches migration routes to juvenile whoopers, trained to follow ultralight aircraft, in an effort to re-establish wild migrating populations.

Since 2001, OM has been escorting a group of juveniles every year to the Chassahowitzka NWR near Homosassa, FL. Last year, OM decided to establish a second wintering destination in Florida and chose St. Marks. This fall's migration will bring the refuge its second class of whoopers and the anticipated return of last year's class, winging it on their own.

At this month's program, Refuge Manager **Terry Peacock** will report the latest news about the birds and OM. Terry is also bringing maps and information about a proposed land



*Whooping Cranes and ultralight over St. Marks  
January 17, 2009 Photo by James A. Carr*

acquisition for the Refuge; she will be taking comments about the proposal at the meeting.

Terry Peacock has been Refuge Manager at St. Marks NWR since 2005. She has also worked at Eufaula NWR in Alabama, St. Vincent NWR in Florida, Washita and Optima NWRs in Oklahoma, and Mingo NWR in Missouri.

## UPCOMING AAS BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

### *Birding at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge*

Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, 8:30-11:30 a.m. (or later)

Hosted by George Weymouth

Skill Level—Easy, \$5 entry fee for the refuge

For carpooling, meet at the Wachovia Bank parking lot on S. Monroe at 7:45 a.m. Otherwise, meet at 8:30 a.m. at the refuge headquarters parking lot. For more information, contact **Elizabeth Platt** at [ejplatt@embarqmail.com](mailto:ejplatt@embarqmail.com) or (850)284-0963.

Bring binoculars, water, insect repellent, and a snack. The trip will end around 11:30 a.m. unless there is interest in continuing. Expect to see wintering water fowl, a few late migrants, alligators, and butterflies. George will discuss behavior and calls, and tell some stories.

**George Weymouth** has lived in Florida most of his adult life and his career has revolved around many areas of wildlife. He is a local artist who frequents many festivals selling his artwork, and he has written articles for *Sanibel Sightings* and *The Wakulla Newspaper*.

### *Hawk Watch at St. Joseph Peninsula State Park*

Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. EST

Hosted by Chris Borg

Skill Level—Easy, \$5 entry fee for the park

**(REGISTRATION REQUIRED)** For carpooling, meet at the Wachovia Bank parking lot on S. Monroe at 7:30 a.m. Otherwise, meet at the Eagle Harbor parking lot inside the park at 10:00 a.m. EST (9:00 a.m. CST). **Those planning to attend must inform Chris prior to 4:00 p.m. on Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup>** at [bikingforbirds@hotmail.com](mailto:bikingforbirds@hotmail.com), or contact **Elizabeth Platt** at [ejplatt@embarqmail.com](mailto:ejplatt@embarqmail.com) or (850)284-0963. Participants should bring the following: binoculars, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, water, snacks and lunch. **Bring a folding chair and/or something to put on the ground;** most of the day will be spent sitting and watching. Sightings may include Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Swainson's, and Broadwinged Hawks, as well as Merlins, Peregrine Falcons, American Kestrels and other late migrants.

**Chris Borg** is a conservation biologist with Tall Timbers Land Conservancy and has been birding for over 20 years.

## BECOME A MEMBER

### Join National Audubon Society and Apalachee Audubon!

For just \$20 a year you can be a member of both National Audubon and our local Apalachee Audubon chapter. Your membership will include *Audubon*, our bimonthly flagship publication. Each issue of this award-winning publication features beautiful photography and provocative journalism. Our chapter newsletter will keep you informed of local and statewide Audubon and other nature-related events.

You can pay for membership using a credit card by calling Audubon's toll free membership number. (***Please mention our chapter ID E-19 for us to get full credit for a new membership.***)

**1-800-274-4201**

If you prefer to pay by check for an annual membership, send your \$20 check made payable to National Audubon Society and mail to:

**National Audubon Society  
PO Box 422246  
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2246**

Allow 4-6 weeks for arrival of your first issue of *Audubon*. The cost of membership is tax deductible except for \$7.50 (which is allocated to *Audubon* magazine).

#### Apalachee Audubon Society (AAS) 2009 – 2010 Officers and Board Members

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**Newsletter Editor:** Kathleen Carr (850) 322-7910  
Newsletter is published 8 times yearly  
(Sept.-May, except December).

**Webmaster:** John Boutelle (850) 656-3346

Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.  
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Tallahassee, FL 32303

**www.apalachee.org**

AAS is a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization. All contributions are tax deductible. Inquiries can also be sent to 76 Dogwood Forest Rd., Crawfordville, FL 32327-0588.

**Mission Statement:** Protection of the environment through education, appreciation, and conservation.

## BIRD BITS: FIELD GUIDES

by Harry Hooper

Bird identification via “old school” was by bird in the hand, the unlucky avian wonder obtained by shotgun. Audubon, Wilson and others collected their specimens by this method. But as ornithologists and “bird watchers” entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea of species conservation began to emerge and the shotgun mentality ended. Opera glasses and ornithological tomes (without drawings) became the norm. Opera glasses improved to what we know today as binoculars. The use of drawings in ornithological books began to emerge.

*Chapman's Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America* 1895/1923 provided line drawings and black and white photographs, but still was not a very useful “in the field” guide.

The year 1934 produced the first easy to use bird identification book, *A Field Guide to the Birds* by Roger Tory Peterson. Peterson placed similar species on the same page facing the same direction and used small arrows on many of the plates to point out important field marks. The book was an immediate success and the field guide market began to flourish. National Geographic, Golden Guides, National Audubon, Stokes, Kaufman, Sibley, National Wildlife, Smithsonian and others began to flood the expanding market.

With so many field guides and so many formats (paintings, photographs, text) available, choosing a bird book became as problematic as attempting to separate winter sparrows. Photographs provided details that a painting might not. Paintings allowed comparison of similar species on one page that photographs generally did not.

With photographs, color, shadows, sunlight, position of the bird all could give false positives on an ID. Color rendition and accuracy of a painting could lead a novice astray on difficult and similar looking birds. Text could be helpful for difficult species.

Then there is the scope of the guides from those that cover the entire U.S. to others that cover only eastern or western states or only families of birds such as shorebirds or sparrows. In the end, the birder has to decide what will work for him or her.

Most will end up with several guides that cover the different formats. Remember, one can never have **too many** bird field guides available.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Ed Gartner

Our Audubon mission, briefly, is to help preserve the environment, and to do our part to improve it.

Birding and other activities are pleasant ways to do this and to bond with one another AND with others. We now have several activities involving at least eight other groups.

If you ask your fellow members, you may find several that you would like to take part in.

Our meetings provide opportunities to do this. Try it.



### REALITIES

Grass is not green. Think about it.

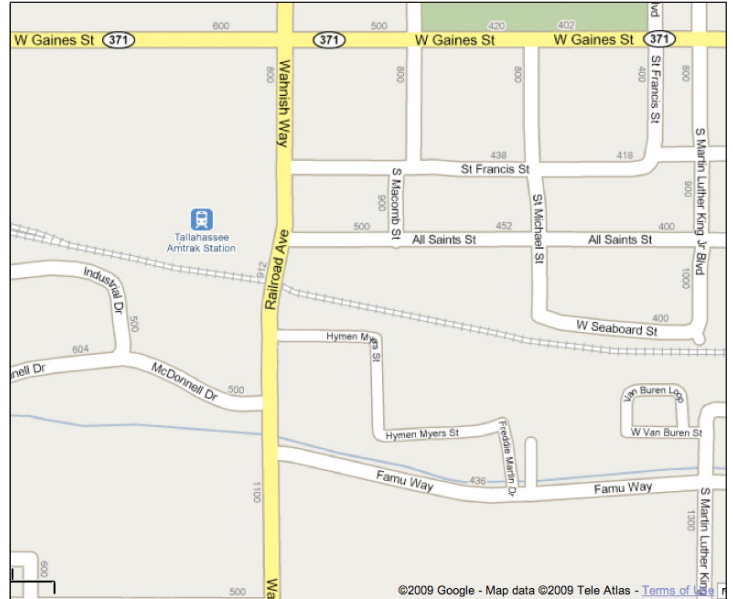
For up-to-date notifications of upcoming activities, join the AAS email notification list at:

[www.groups.google.com/group/apalachee-audubon/](http://www.groups.google.com/group/apalachee-audubon/)

## AAS PROGRAM MEETING LOCATION

Historic Amtrak Station  
918 Railroad Avenue  
Tallahassee, Florida

**Note:** A reminder that Gaines Street is undergoing construction and portions of the road will be closed between 7:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Please allow extra time for potential detours.



## NATIVE NURSERIES

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[www.nativenurseries.com](http://www.nativenurseries.com)

### Upcoming AAS Program Speakers & Topics

- November 19 Fred Bassett, *Hummingbirds*  
(Hummer Bird Study Group)
- 2010
- January 28 Jim Cox, *Hunting*  
(Tall Timbers)
- February 25 Sandy Beck, *Owls*  
(St. Francis Wildlife)
- March 25 Donna Legare, *Planting for Wildlife*  
(Native Nurseries)

## Wild Birds Unlimited



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and the serious birder!

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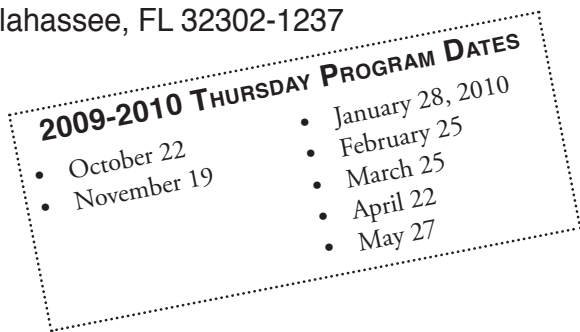
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## APALACHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR: OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2009

*Note: A reminder that Gaines Street is undergoing construction and portions of the road will be closed after 7:00 p.m.*

October Potluck dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. Meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. Potluck & meeting located at the historic Amtrak Station, 918 Railroad Avenue—map on page 3. For details, call (850)510-4877 or visit: [www.apalachee.org](http://www.apalachee.org)

### Chapter/Audubon Events

#### October

- 22 Potluck Dinner & Program Meeting:** Operation Migration/Whooping Crane update from Terry Peacock from SMNWR. Details, page 1.
- 23-24 2009 Audubon Assembly:** St. Petersburg. Details at [audubonofflorida.org](http://audubonofflorida.org).
- 31 Field Trip:** St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge with George Weymouth. 8:30-11:30 a.m. Details, page 1.

#### November

- 7 Hawkwatch at St. Joseph Peninsula State Park:** Join Chris Borg for a day of observing migrating hawks. Meet at the park at 10:00 a.m. EST (9:00 CST). Details, page 1.
- 14 Bird Songs Birdwalk at Birdsong:** Melissa Forehand will lead a walk that will focus on birding by ear, identifying birds by their songs and calls.

#### November (cont.)

- 19 Program Meeting:** Fred Bassett of the Hummer Bird Study Group will talk about winter and summer populations of hummingbirds in the Southeast.

### Related Events

#### October

- TBA** Groundbreaking for butterfly garden planting project at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. For information updates, check the AAS web site or call Ed Gartner, Harry Hooper, Lynn Reynolds, or Ann Bruce (See masthead on page 2).

*See page 3 for upcoming program speakers and topics.*